

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Center for Fostering Success
~Fostering Success In Education and Career for
Michigan's Youth and Alumni of Care~

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RE: Support for inclusion of the Fostering Futures Scholarship on the voluntary contributions tax form

To whom it may concern,

The "college years" are often talked about as a time of self-discovery, career exploration, new friendships and personal growth. However, many students who experienced foster care find themselves having to choose between the costs to stay in college OR pay for rent, keep food on their tables or other day-to-day survival needs. For students who experienced foster care, the State of Michigan was their parent for a time, and often there is no "home to call" when money runs out nor is there anyone to co-sign on leases or loans to help with common post-secondary education start-up costs. Furthermore, many young people making their way from foster care to and through college must also contend with counseling and support costs related to post-traumatic-stress effects from child abuse and neglect, and separation grief and loss that is part of the foster care experience.

In the last several years Michigan has made great strides to increase college access and success for students who experienced foster care. Chief among these efforts is the Fostering Futures Scholarship which provides financial support to young adults pursuing an undergraduate education who have spent time in foster care after their 13th birthday. One unique aspect of this scholarship is that part of the funding raised can be used to support non-tuition related expenses such as room and board. This portion of the scholarship is supported through the generous donations of Michigan's citizens who believe that students who experienced foster care deserve to have a safe place to live and food to eat while they earn their college degree.

Michigan youth who experienced foster care are our most vulnerable student population. Including the Fostering Futures Scholarship on the voluntary contributions tax form, would allow even more of Michigan's citizens to support our students who experience foster care as they work toward their college goals. We urge you to help provide for the basic needs of these resilient young adults and support the inclusion of the Fostering Futures Scholarship on the voluntary contributions tax form.

Sincerely,

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